The Builder.

No. CLXXXIII.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 1846.

LOUCESTER, the *fair city* of the British, as some say (Caer Glow), was well chosen as a meeting-place by the British Archæological Association. It stands on a Roman basis, it possesses a noble cathedral, several interesting churches, and has many places in the neighbourhood, as Tewkesbury, Cirencester, Goodrich Castle and Court, Sodeley, Berkeley Castle, and others, with strong attractions for the antiquary and architect. Beyond these, however, the subject of archæology has been much neglected in Gloucester, and many objects of great interest have been allowed to disappear without any efforts for their preservation being made. To induce an interest in the subject, to shew the value of vestiges of antiquity in connection with history, and lead to a proper study of them, are the purposes of such societies; and therefore it is, we say, that Gloucester was well chosen for this congress. The enlightened study of antiquities has been productive of the greatest advantages, and will be more so. We are thereby arriving at a truer knowledge of our forefathers and their times, and are under the greatest obligations to those who, in the face of ridicule, have assisted to preserve ruined buildings, half effaced inscriptions, "unreadable" parchments, and broken pottery. To lead to the conservation of ancient monuments, a knowledge of their value must be spread abroad, and this the provincial visits of the Archæological Association, and the Institute, cannot fail to effect.

The latter body met a few weeks ago at York, and we laid before our readers abstracts of such of the papers read as were likely to interest them. Being unluckily prevented from attending there, no mention was made of the general proceedings, and as we are about to speak at some length of those at Gloucester, we cannot refrain from alluding to the omission, to prevent the charge of partizanship, which up to this we have successfully avoided. Our opinion of the disagreement is known to the readers of The Builder. We regret the division that took place, and hope one day to see a junction effected; but while they are working separately will give both all the aid in our power, with a view to the successful prosecution of their useful purpose.

To return then to the British Archæological Association at Gloucester:—

On Monday, at three o'clock, a General Meeting was held at the Shire Hall, when Mr. Pettigrew, vice-president, in the absence of Lord Albert Conyngham, through illness, reviewed, ably, the doings of the association since its establishment.

Mr. Pettigrew said justly, that the ridicule which formerly attached to the pursuits of antiquaries no longer existed: "a proper view of their importance is entertained, and their connection with history forms now the primary and proper object of their application. The importance to carry out such extended objects, for the illustration of which much and varied knowledge is demanded, has been strikingly shewn in the labours of this association, which yet can claim only an existence of scarcely three years." In mentioning the ancient structures preserved by the interference of the association, the chairman dwelt particularly on the efforts made to save Caistor Castle, and the success which attended them; because, he said, the merit of it had been claimed for the Archæological Institute.

Mr. Roach Smith, honorary secretary, read a notice, by Mr. T. Inskipp, of a tesselated Roman pavement, discovered in Gloucester in 1844, and hitherto unpublished. Mr. Inskipp was passing accidentally through the city at the moment it was found, and made a drawing of it before it was destroyed.

Mr. Farmer Dukes, F.S.A., submitted an account of the ancient baronial mansion of Plaish, Salop, built in the 16th century. It was stated that the owner, a judge, inquired, at the time he was building it, for an artisan who could execute the ornamental chimney-shafts, and was told that he had himself just condemned to death the only man in the neighbourhood who could construct them. Then, said the judge, he shall do my chimneys first. And accordingly the cunning workman was respited *pro tem.*, executed the chimneys, and was then hung.

The members dined together at the Bell Inn, but our notice must not extend to matters social. At the evening meeting, which was numerously attended, an interesting paper on

THE NEW INN AT GLOUCESTER, AND ANCIENT HOSTELS,

by Mr. Britton, was read by Mr. Godwin.

We make the following extracts in the writer's own words:—

"It is to me a source of great gratification to hail the present meeting. I exult in having lived to see an epoch calculated to exalt and popularize the study of *Archæology*. I use the term *popularize* from a comparison and contrast between the state of archæology and antiquarian literature *now*, and at the beginning of the present century, when I first entered upon its study and practice. At that time an antiquary was regarded as a dull, plodding, abstracted, and eccentric being, ridiculed by the satirist and dramatist, and separated from men of general science and general literature. Now we have had, and still have, not only many profound scholars amongst its distinguished votaries, but men of varied and preeminent talents. I could exemplify this assertion by reference to names which command the respect of all classes of society. Amongst those who no longer remain to us, were Sir Walter Scott, the Whitakers of Cornwall and of Yorkshire, Daniel and Samuel Lysons, Mr. Surtees, Sir Henry Englefield, Mr. Hamper, and many others whose talents and writings have conferred honour on English literature.

Struggling and groping as I did in the early part of my literary career, I view with astonishment and delight, the rapid progress which has been lately made in topographical and antiquarian literature. Formerly there were but few authors, few draftsmen, and few engravers, qualified to elucidate or illustrate, with skill or taste, the many and varied subjects belonging to this branch of learning. *Now*, if their amount could be stated in round numbers, it would astonish the ordinary observer. This may be easily inferred from a review of the many publications which have recently issued from the press, and from the works of numerous amateur artists and authors which are limited to friendly circles. I have watched with anxiety and interest the growth of this taste,—the budding and blossoming of this rare fruit in the garden of England, and feel assured that the Archæological Association will eminently tend to nurture and bring to ripeness many useful specimens.

Change, reformation, revolution, is inherent in all mundane things. The seasons present an endless succession of changes, and all terrestrial and celestial objects move onward, and revolve; thereby exhibiting new phases and aspects for the study and admiration of man. So even all the works of man himself undergo mutations, from perfection, or completeness, to ruin and annihilation. Hence we are induced to view with curiosity and interest the handicraft and artistic productions of former generations as evidences of the manners, customs, and intellectual qualities of their producers; and to endeavour to deduce history from buildings, statues, coins, domestic utensils, and indeed from every variety of implement or ornament. This is the province of the archæologist. In the architectural ruins of Egypt, Greece, and Italy, we see and estimate the character and condition of mankind in times and countries far removed from our own; and in such reviews we acquire wisdom and find pleasure.

The *dark ages* and *enlightened ages* are terms of comparative import and meaning. We of the present day are arrogant enough to fancy that we live in the latter, and that our ancestors groped in mental darkness during the former. What are called the *middle ages* certainly exhibit a very useful contrast to the present, as well as to those of the Grecian, the Roman, and the later Egyptian dynasties. From archæological evidence—perhaps a better and more authentic source than even literary records of ancient history—we know that in the useful and ornamental arts the Egyptians were far advanced, both in knowledge and in practice. By the Greeks all these were further improved, and more adapted to the desires and the necessities of a refined and luxurious people. But in the *middle ages*,—from the dominion of the Saxons in Britain to the advent of the Tudor family,—we do not find much elegance, grace, or beauty, except in *one*, and that the noblest of the arts. *Architecture* was even in those ages diligently studied, and hundreds, nay, thousands of churches were erected, which are calculated to excite our utmost admiration and surprise.

It is not, however, with the great masterpieces of the freemasons of those olden times that we have now to deal. Our present object is merely to direct attention,—by some general remarks upon a class of interesting old buildings,—the *ancient inns* or *hostelries of England*,—to one of the most curious specimens of that class now remaining,—the "New Inn," in the city of Gloucester, as it is still somewhat inconsistently termed.

The peculiar comforts of the inn or tavern have possessed a charm for Englishmen, from the days of Chaucer, when Canterbury pilgrimsmade them places of halting and refreshment, to the time of Shakspere (whose "Falstaff" indignantly exclaims, "Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?") and again to the time of Dr. Johnson, who declared a "tavern chair" to be "the throne of earthly felicity."

The "New Inn" at Gloucester was itself erected about half a century after Chaucer's death, and probably supplied the place of one much older.

Pilgrimages, which Aubrey, as well as Chaucer, mentions, were greatly conducive to increasing the number and importance of *Inns*.

The priory of Lewes in Sussex, had a hostelry in the parish of St. Olave's, Southwark, where the fraternity were themselves lodged, and where they dispensed their hospitality when they visited London. It afterwards became a public inn, known as the Walnut Tree, and in forming the approaches to New London Bridge, some remains of the building (a crypt of Norman character), were discovered.*

Many old inns may be still met with between London and Canterbury;—at Dartford especially.

The *George*, at Glastonbury, is a well known ancient pilgrims' inn, and remarkable for its fine architectural exterior elevation.

A curious ancient inn at the corner of Spicer-street, St. Alban's, is illustrated (from a drawing by Buckler), in *Gentleman's Magazine*—(September 1845).

The *Angel*, at Grantham; the *Red Lion*, at Corsham, &c., are more or less curious and interesting.—In plan and arrangement, these buildings were all similar to each other.

It is a recorded fact, that the "New Inn" was built by John Twining, a monk of Gloucester, during the abbacy of Thomas Seabrooke, who presided over the monastery there from 1450 till his death in 1457; and it is still the property of the dean and chapter of the present cathedral establishment.

There can be very little doubt that this inn

* See "Brayley's Graphic Illustrations."

For more information on PDF Compression and OCR go to our website